In the Claims:

1.(original) A $G_{\alpha q}$-Gustducin chimeric G-protein.

2.(currently amended) The chimeric $G_{\alpha q}$-Gustducin according to ~~of~~ claim 1 characterised in that it is a $G_{\alpha 15 \text{ or } 16}$-Gustducin protein

3.(currently amended) The chimeric G-protein according to ~~of~~ claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~ wherein at least the last 5 amino acids of the $G_{\alpha q}$ are replaced by a corresponding number of amino acids of Gustducin.

4.(currently amended) The chimeric G-protein according to ~~of~~ claim 3 wherein the last 44 amino acid sequences of the $G_{\alpha q}$ is replaced with a 44 amino acid unit of Gustducin.

5.(original) A chimeric G-protein according to claim 1 having an amino acid sequence set forth in the SEQ ID 2

6.(original) A G-protein according to claim 1 encoded for by a nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID 1

7.(currently amended) A nucleic acid comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID 1 encoding for a G-protein according to ~~defined in~~ claim 1.

8.(currently amended) An expression vector comprising nucleic acid comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID 1 encoding for a G-protein according to ~~defined in~~ claim 1.

9.(currently amended) A host cell transformed with an expression vector as according to ~~defined in~~ claim 8.

10.(currently amended) A method of producing a chimeric G-protein according to ~~as defined in~~ claim 1 comprising the step of culturing host cells having contained therein an expression vector encoding for the chimeric G-protein, under conditions sufficient for expression of said G-protein, thereby causing production of the protein, and recovering the protein produced by the cell.

11.(currently amended) A method of analysis and discovery of modulators of bitter taste receptors using the chimeric proteins according to ~~defined in~~ claim 1.

12.(currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 11 employing a mammalian cell-based assay employing a transfected gene or cDNA encoding a chimeric protein of the invention and a taste receptor, the method comprising the steps of contacting a compound with cells, and determining the functional effect of the compound on chimeric G-protein.

13.(original) A method according to claim 12 wherein the functional effect is determined by measuring the changes in intracellular messengers such as IP3 or calcium^{2+}.

14.(currently amended) A compound, or collection of compounds containing said compound, that acts to modulate taste response of taste receptors for use in an assay method according to ~~defined in~~ claim 11.

15.(currently amended) A compound, or collection of compounds containing the compound discovered according to an assay method according to claim 11 ~~described in claims 11~~ and foods, beverages or oral pharmaceutical or neutraceutical preparations containing same.

16.(new) The chimeric G-protein according to claim 2 wherein at least the last 5 amino acids of the $G_{\alpha q}$ are replaced by a corresponding number of amino acids of Gustducin.

17.(new) The chimeric G-protein according to claim 16 wherein the last 44 amino acid sequences of the $G_{\alpha q}$ is replaced with a 44 amino acid unit of Gustducin.